



Public Affairs Section
United States Embassy Nairobi

Asiyefunzwa na mamaye ufunzwa na ulimwengu.

*If you do not follow your mother's teachings, the world
will take over*



March 8, 2010

At a reception for International Women's Day, Ambassador Ranneberger and hundreds of men and women celebrated the spirit of eleven Kenyan women for their outstanding efforts in promoting health, peace, justice, education, human rights and environmental causes.

Those honored were:

Anne Njogu, Executive Director of the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW), was chosen this year for the Secretary of State's Women of Peace Award. Ann is currently in the United States to accept the award. As we all know, Ann has been on the frontlines in the fight against corruption, the push for gender equality, and the battle for constitutional reform. She was also instrumental in the passage of the Sexual Offences Act.

Caroline Ruto, Director of Smart Citizens, is a young activist from Rift Valley who is spearheading the promotion of reconciliation and dialogue throughout the country. She is one of the leaders of the National Youth Forum, a group of grassroots youth organizations working across political and ethnic lines to push for implementation of the reform agenda. She has been instrumental in the holding of youth town hall meetings as part of efforts to empower young people to participate in the democratic process. She involves the provincial administration and relevant officials in these activities and has earned recognition from the public and the government.

Mrs. Honorine Kiplagat, who is a National Trustee of the Kenya Girl Guides Association, for a lifetime of dedication to helping Kenyan girls. Honorine has been instrumental in taking the Kenya Girl Guides Association to greater heights. Her vision is to enable girls and young women in the movement to develop their full potential and become responsible citizens. She has had a profound impact in helping girls acquire education and then play a positive role in the life of the country. As a guide and role model, she has used her leadership and organization skills to fund raise and spearhead activities geared towards helping the needy, and institutions such as the Starehe Girls Center. She is a founding member of the school, and also helped establish the Kibera Girls Rehabilitation Center.

Sister Josephine Warau at Our Lady of Peace School works tirelessly to make the school a center of excellence. She also works to link needy children to sponsors and, in so doing, changes lives for the better.

Sister Margaret Maitha, Founder of Kenya Charities Finance which supports 43,130 people, including children and youth from disadvantaged families, orphans, people living with HIV and Aids, and elderly people who care for orphans and vulnerable children. She has walked quite a road to set up Kenya Charities Finance to accomplish this feat.

Ms. Bright Oywaya Director of the Association for Safe International Road Travel Kenya. A banker by profession, she found her calling through a horrific road crash. In 1997 she was traveling in a Toyota Corolla heading to Malindi. A terrible accident injured her spinal cord. After the crash she resigned from the bank to take counseling courses. She is now a professional counselor at the national spinal injury hospital where she has been counseling road crash victims since 2004.

Ms. Rahma Abdullahi recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry, First Class Honors. From standard one to three she learned under a tree. She managed to go to boarding school in Kitui for her secondary school education. She had access to books and electricity and could study at night. She joined Kenyatta University and managed to graduate top of her class!

Ms. Pamela Akello and Margaret Lessuda are District Education Officers in Nyanza. Pamela is the District Education Officer in Migori, an area known for child labour, violence against women, and forced marriages. She mentors girls and improves their performance in national examinations through the Girls' Mentoring Program. Mrs. Lessuda formed a committee to ensure that pregnant school drop-outs continue their education.

Irene Mureithi is Executive Director of the Child Welfare Society of Kenya. Irene is a widow who has dedicated her life to the service of children. She joined the organization in October 2002 when it was on the verge of collapse. The staff was demoralized, with one year salary arrears. She went for eight months without pay, and played a decisive role in revitalizing the

organization. Had she listened to her detractors, thousands of children today would have sunk into destitution.

Jane Wathome, the founder of Beacon of Hope, an organization which receives support through USAID, has made a difference in the lives of many Kenyans affected by HIV. BOH works with the community to support orphans and vulnerable children, provides voluntary counseling and testing, and home based care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Catherine Nyambala, who is the manager of Linksoft Centre of Excellence. She has been chosen to participate in the very prestigious Global Women's Mentoring Partnership Selection run by Fortune 500 and the State Department.

Dr. Lennah Nyabiage is a pediatric specialist who began a career in public health working when she volunteered to assist with tuberculosis control efforts in Nyanza province during her annual leave in 2003. She moved from support for tuberculosis control to support for establishment of HIV care and treatment programs and was named PARTO (provincial aids control officer) for Nyanza Province in 2004. She has been instrumental in the rapid expansion of HIV care and treatment sites in Nyanza Province, bringing to the job outstanding technical expertise, remarkable endurance, and tireless dedication.

Read about the Unsung Heroes of Kenya and other great accomplishments of women in Kenya in [Ambassador Ranneberger's Speech](#)